

I wish we were here today to actually do something to support and improve the 9/11 Memorial & Museum, but unfortunately, that is not the case. On balance, this bill doesn't do any harm either. It attempts to bring attention to a very important effort. I will be voting for it, but I am disappointed that this is where things are.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LALOTA), the lead sponsor of the bill.

Mr. LALOTA. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee for yielding and for supporting this bill but most importantly for supporting the 9/11 families.

Madam Speaker, September 11, 2001, was not just a day of immense loss, it was a day that changed our Nation forever.

Nearly 3,000 innocent lives were taken from us in an act of unimaginable evil. First responders, driven by duty and selflessness, rushed into danger, and many never returned. Families were shattered, communities forever altered, and the scars of that day remain with us even now.

From that darkness came an incredible light, the resilience of the American spirit. We vowed on that fateful Tuesday morning never to forget and promised to honor the victims and the heroes that gave everything in the face of terror.

Today, we have a chance to uphold that promise. The 9/11 Memorial & Museum stands as a sacred place, a place of reflection, education, and unity. It is where generations can learn about the courage and sacrifice that defines us as a nation. It tells us the stories of firefighters who climbed up while others ran down, the passengers on flight 93 who fought back, and everyday Americans who became heroes.

However, the 9/11 Memorial & Museum remains a top target for terrorists and faces financial challenges stemming from the COVID-19 shutdown that threatens its ability to keep up its essential work.

My bill, the 9/11 Memorial and Museum Act directs the Department of Homeland Security to award a one-time grant to the National September 11 Memorial & Museum for the security, operation, and maintenance of its facilities and grounds.

As a condition of receiving this grant, the museum must provide free admission for active and retired members of the Armed Forces, individuals who were registered first responders to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and the family members and victims of the attacks.

It also provides for dedicated free admission hours for the general public at least once a week and allows for annual Federal audits of the 9/11 Memorial & Museum's financial statements.

This ought not to be a partisan issue. This is about honoring our history,

protecting our legacy, and teaching future generations the lessons of 9/11.

We must not let the memory of that day fade. We cannot allow the heroism, the sacrifice, and the unity that followed be forgotten.

Supporting this bill means standing with the families of the fallen, with our first responders, and with every American who still carries the weight of that day on their hearts.

I urge my colleagues to join me in ensuring that we keep our promise. Let's pass the 9/11 Memorial and Museum Act and uphold our commitment to the American people.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time. I am prepared to close, and I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ANSARI. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, H.R. 835 ensures that the hallowed grounds on which the 9/11 Memorial & Museum are located remain a place of remembrance and honor for families, first responders, and Americans from across our great Nation.

I urge the adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 835.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### ALASKA NATIVE SETTLEMENT TRUST ELIGIBILITY ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 42) to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to exclude certain payments to aged, blind, or disabled Alaska Natives or descendants of Alaska Natives from being used to determine eligibility for certain programs, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 42

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Alaska Native Settlement Trust Eligibility Act".

#### SEC. 2. ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN PROGRAMS.

Section 29(c) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1626(c)) is amended, in the undesignated matter following paragraph (3), by striking subparagraph (E) and inserting the following:

"(E) an interest in a Settlement Trust and, for the 5-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Alaska Native Settlement Trust Eligibility Act, an amount distributed from or benefit provided by a Settlement Trust to a Native or descendant of a Native who is an aged, blind, or disabled in-

dividual (as defined in section 1614(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1382c(a)))."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. ANSARI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to add extraneous material on H.R. 42, the bill now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 42 would exclude the amounts distributed or benefits provided from the Alaska Native corporation, or the ANC, settlement trusts to Alaska Natives who are blind, disabled, 65 years or older, or their descendants, when determining eligibility for means-tested Federal benefits.

Federal means-tested benefits include programs such as Supplemental Security Income, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and Federal housing benefits.

In 1988, Congress amended the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, or ANCSA, to exclude the first \$2,000 any Alaska Native individual receives from an ANC when determining eligibility for means-tested Federal benefits.

Additionally, the 1988 amendments authorized ANCs to establish settlement trusts to distribute benefits to Alaska Native beneficiaries.

Yet, benefits from settlement trusts were not excluded when determining recipient eligibility for government assistance programs, as with the first \$2,000 of other benefits Alaska Natives can receive from ANCs.

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ANCs have brought forward concerns with this discrepancy and the impact it has on Alaska Natives, particularly those who are aged, blind, or disabled. Often these individuals are placed in the position of choosing between accepting the settlement trust income or qualifying for government assistance programs.

H.R. 42 would address this oversight and exclude the amounts for benefits distributed to aged, blind, or disabled Alaska Natives from settlement trusts when determining eligibility for means-tested Federal benefits.

I thank the sponsor of this legislation, our freshman Member from Alaska, Mr. BEGICH, for his leadership in addressing this important issue and for introducing this bill on the first day of the 119th Congress so it could quickly be brought to the floor for consideration.

Madam Speaker, I support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ANSARI. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I rise in support of Representative BEGICH's H.R. 42, the Alaska Native Settlement Trust Eligibility Act.

Congress passed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in 1971 to address land claims in the State of Alaska. Per an agreement, Alaska Native corporations were established, and the Federal Government transferred to them 44 million acres and \$962.5 million in compensation funds.

However, when an individual receives a distribution from an Alaska Native settlement trust, part of this law requires that the Federal Government include that distribution when determining the person's eligibility for various governmental programs such as for housing and supplemental income and nutritional assistance.

H.R. 42 would amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to exclude from that calculation any such distributions provided to aged, blind, or disabled Alaska Natives.

These are critical services that support the livelihoods of some of the most vulnerable Alaska Natives. Over the years, the failure to address this issue has often forced Alaska Natives to choose between receiving the settlement trust fund benefits they are entitled to or qualifying for need-based Federal benefits. H.R. 42 would solve this problem, which is great news.

I will remind my colleagues, though, that this bill of course, doesn't remove the risk that this administration will try to illegally freeze or pause anyone's Federal benefits. Moreover, this bill will be of small comfort if Republicans make good on their promises to cut need-based Federal programs to pay for their billionaire tax breaks. These aren't hypotheticals. The House Republican Study Committee's budget proposal last fall called for cutting SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, by about 22 percent, for example.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, but I also urge them to oppose the lawlessness we have been seeing in the administration and to oppose cuts to programs that help the most vulnerable people in our communities. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH), who is the lead sponsor of this bill.

Mr. BEGICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 42, the Alaska Native Settlement Trust Eligibility Act. This legislation makes a simple but necessary fix to Federal law, ensuring that certain benefits distributed through Alaska Native corporation settlement trusts do not unreasonably disqualify vulnerable Alaskans from receiving assistance.

For decades, Alaska Native corporations have provided vital support to

their shareholders, including through settlement trusts, an essential tool Congress authorized in 1988 to deliver benefits in a structured, perpetual way. However, due to an oversight in the law, payments from these trusts are counted as income when determining eligibility for Federal programs like Supplemental Security Income, SNAP, and housing assistance.

That means visually impaired and disabled Alaska Natives and elders are forced to make an impossible choice: accept the benefits from their settlement trusts or maintain their access to critical assistance.

By ensuring that these benefits are not counted as income, H.R. 42 aligns settlement trust distributions with other Alaska Native benefits already excluded from eligibility calculations. It upholds the original intent of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and protects the most vulnerable in need in our Alaska Native communities.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan, commonsense legislation. Let's ensure that no one has to choose between their critical assistance and their well-being.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time. I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ANSARI. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, again, this legislation would ensure that amounts distributed or benefits provided from Alaska Native corporation settlement trusts to Alaska Natives who are blind, disabled, or elders aged 65 and older, or their descendants, are excluded when determining eligibility for means-tested Federal benefits.

Again, Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. BEGICH for his work on an important issue for Alaska Natives, I urge the adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 42.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### ALASKA NATIVE VILLAGE MUNICIPAL LANDS RESTORATION ACT OF 2025

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 43) to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to provide that Village Corporations shall not be required to convey land in trust to the State of Alaska for the estab-

lishment of Municipal Corporations, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 43

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Alaska Native Village Municipal Lands Restoration Act of 2025".

#### SEC. 2. REVERSION OF CERTAIN LAND CONVEYED IN TRUST TO THE STATE OF ALASKA.

Section 14(c) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1613(c)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (5) as subparagraphs (A) through (E), respectively, and indenting appropriately;

(2) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) (as so redesignated), by striking "(c) Each patent" and inserting the following:

"(c) CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN LAND BY VILLAGE CORPORATION.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Each patent";

(3) in paragraph (1) (as so designated), in the undesignated matter following subparagraph (E) (as so redesignated), in the first sentence—

(A) by striking "section 14(c) of this Act" and inserting "this subsection"; and

(B) by striking "There is authorized" and inserting the following:

"(2) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized";

(4) in paragraph (2)(A) (as so redesignated), in the second sentence, by striking "The Secretary" and inserting the following:

"(B) FORM OF FUNDING.—The Secretary"; and

(5) in paragraph (1) (as so designated)—

(A) in each of subparagraphs (A) and (B) (as so redesignated)—

(i) by striking "the" the first place it appears and inserting "The"; and

(ii) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting a period;

(B) in subparagraph (D) (as so redesignated), by striking "the" the first place it appears and inserting "The";

(C) by striking "existed as of" in subparagraph (D) (as so redesignated) and all that follows through "for" in subparagraph (E) (as so redesignated) and inserting the following: "existed as of December 18, 1971.

"(E) For"; and

(D) in subparagraph (C) (as so redesignated)—

(i) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting a period;

(ii) by striking "in trust: *Provided, however, That the word*" and all that follows through "sentence," and inserting the following: "in trust.

"(II) DEFINITION OF SALE.—For purposes of subclause (I), the term 'sale'";

(iii) by striking "one thousand two hundred and eighty acres: *Provided further, That any net*" and inserting the following: "1,280 acres.

"(iii) NET REVENUES.—

"(I) IN GENERAL.—Any net";

(iv) by striking "community needs: *Provided, That the*" and inserting the following: "community needs.

"(ii) MINIMUM ACREAGE.—The";

(v) by striking "(C) the Village Corporation" and inserting the following:

"(C) CONVEYANCE TO MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OR THE STATE IN TRUST.—

"(i) IN GENERAL.—The Village Corporation"; and

(vi) by adding at the end the following:

"(iv) CASES IN WHICH CONVEYANCE SHALL NOT BE REQUIRED.—